

STATE OF VERMONT
PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD

Docket No. 7970

Petition of Vermont Gas Systems, Inc. for)
a certificate of public good, pursuant to)
30 V.S.A. § 248, authorizing the construction)
of approximately 43 miles of new natural gas)
transmission pipeline in Chittenden and Addison)
Counties, approximately 5 miles of new)
distribution mainlines in Addison County,)
together with three new gate stations in Williston,)
New Haven and Middlebury, Vermont)

December 22, 2014

**EMERGENCY MOTION TO ENLARGE TIME, HALT CONSTRUCTION AND APPOINT
INDEPENDENT COUNSEL**

I, Nathan Palmer make a motion to delay all deadlines related to the latest price increase on the above docket until some clarification can be made as to what is due when. I also make a motion that VGS halts all construction and easement negotiations on the Project until such time when the Board can evaluate the new cost increase. Also, I move that the Board appoint independent counsel for property owners and intervenors.

As a *pro se* intervenor, I have struggled with the rules and regulations, formats and deadlines required in order to participate in this process and protect my property and the environmental health and future of Vermont. I would like to reiterate the need for Independent Counsel to be appointed to represent the public since now more than ever it's obvious that there was a complete lack of due diligence the last time around with VGS and their badly timed (for opposing parties) cost release bombs.

It has become apparent to me that VGS' approach for acceptance of this project is to low ball the cost estimate and then ask for exorbitant cost increases later, a practice I abhor and would never subject my own customers to. The old "easier to ask for forgiveness than ask for permission beforehand" approach. VGS assured the Board in July that the project was "more mature" and the major costs were already confirmed..the pipe bought, most contracts signed, etc. (see technical hearing transcript Eileen Simollardes pages 52,lines 24,25 and 53, lines1-12) at the technical hearings just this last September.

Neither the Board nor the parties have adequate information to scrutinize the new costs in a timely manner since VGS provided few, if any details. However, VGS' letter notes new construction and project management cost increases, both of which fly in the face of VGS' prior testimony. New management is not an excuse for incompetent processes or poor prior performance. It is also not an excuse for future incompetent application of costing estimation methodology or poor corporate

performance. To me, "reset" has become the new "deja vu." How many more times does VGS get to play the old "people screwed up, but now we have new people and they're so much better and so much more 'candid'" card? More importantly, why should VGS be allowed to play that card at the last minute before the one year mark after the Board's issuance of the certificate of public good?

I see serious problems with VGS' statement about the maturity of the project and accuracy of the new cost estimate, but I and all of the other parties need reasonable time to develop a response, and we obviously need complete information to do so. I think that we have a right to a reasonable process - VGS should not be allowed to game the system.

I find it interesting that VGS has waited until this time (in the midst of the holidays) to again drop this bomb. With the one year anniversary of the Board granting the original CPG (I am still not sure if that was the final order or not, the Board has not yet clarified this) either today or tomorrow, (I am not sure which as it has not been stated) I find I am at a loss to submit anything intelligent in time to make any dissent in the way things are unfolding. As stated before, I am self employed and have a life other than this process. I cannot afford an attorney and I would really, really like to enjoy this holiday season (what is left of it) without pressure the pressure of filing deadlines hanging over my head.

Furthermore, I feel the Board should instruct VGS to halt construction on Phase 1 (something they claim they are doing anyway due to winter weather) and stop all easement negotiations with landowners who haven't yet come to terms with VGS.(something else they were instructed to do as per the Governor's team) There is no warrant for VGS to spend any more of the ratepayers money until the Board has re-evaluated the new cost verses the benefits of the Project.

With all of the confusion and VGS' partial file and promise to follow up with more information, we feel that the Board may have erred in requesting comments by January 8th. The parties do not have complete information. We therefore request that the Board reconsider its December 19, 2014 memorandum and direct VGS to provide detailed information about the cost increase and then give parties reasonable time to comment following VGS' revised or supplemental filing

In light of this confusion, pressure and holiday season, (and I can't believe I am the only one!) I respectfully request that the Board hit the pause button and halt construction and easement negotiation, and also put a suspension on all deadlines relating to this docket until after January 8 and it can be clearly delineated as to what is due when. And please consider appointing independent counsel.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Respectfully submitted,
Nathan B. Palmer

Nathan Palmer, *pro se*
986 Rotax Road
North Ferrisburgh, VT 05473

